

Implementing e-learning guideline(s)

Institution: Otago Polytechnic

Title: The power of design on flexible learning and digital network literacy

Lead applicant(s): Leigh Blackall, Bronwyn Hegarty, Terry Marler

List the guideline(s) that the project will use:

- TD11 Should staff use a team approach to develop and teach the course?
- TD12 Is the design of learning informed by research on effective eLearning?
- TO9 Are staff encouraged to participate in networks and learning communities involved in reviewing, developing or sharing good practice in the use of e-learning?

Briefly outline your draft plan for implementation:

This project will support development of a course in Otago Polytechnic's Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Learning and Teaching (GCTLT) called *Designing for Flexible Learning*. It is under development and will be run for the first time in 2006. The intention of this course is to better inform flexible learning development with wider ranging pedagogical frameworks, practices and models, and align more appropriately the various information and communications technologies for use in online learning.

This project will be conducted in three phases:

1. An exploration of exemplar case studies in the guidelines to examine design models.
2. A research evaluation of the effectiveness of: the GCTLT course called *Designing for Flexible Learning and the relationship with the three guidelines*. Including the influence of strategies for networked learning and learning communities on levels of digital networked literacy and self-efficacy for eLearning.
3. Setting up or working into established networked learning communities for continuing professional development.

Ideally, educational theory and models should inform the structure of online course development and implementation. In reality, however, particularly with the pervasive use of Learning Management Systems, the templates and features these systems provide tend to drive the design of online courses. In other words current and emerging pedagogical frameworks and models, especially for online learning, have to fit pre-determined LMS structures and features rather than the reverse (Siemens, G. (2004). Learning Management Systems: The wrong place to start learning. Available at: <http://www.elearnspace.org/Articles/lms.htm>).

Historically the use of LMS for institutionalised online learning may be attributed to management concerns over staff levels of *digital network literacy* and self-efficacy with eLearning, and the need for a system to standardise information and communication around online courses. But as those two issues evolve and Internet based information and communication becomes generally demystified, pedagogical frameworks and models can re-emerge as the focus for facilitating learning rather than the inevitable limitations of specified technologies and systems.

Digital network literacy - while still emerging as a new form of literacy, may be defined by the following statement: "...the set of abilities and skills where aural, visual and digital literacy overlap. These include the ability to understand the power of images and sounds, to recognize and use that power, to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute them pervasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms" (The New Media Consortium (2004). A global imperative: The report of the 21st Century literacy summit. Available at: http://www.newmediacenter.org/pdf/Global_Imperative.pdf)

Self-efficacy in eLearning is defined as:

"The belief people have in their own abilities to perform in particular areas related to eLearning. The higher the level of self-efficacy the more confident one is to deal with challenges in eLearning " (Hegarty, B., Penman, M., Brown, C. & Coburn, D. et al. (2005). Approaches and implications of eLearning adoption in relation to academic staff efficacy and working practice. lead researcher and writer of the report. Universal College of Learning & Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://cms.steo.govt.nz/eLearning/Projects/Tertiary+%28e%29Learning+Research+Fund+%28TeLRF%29.htm> Ministry of Education New Zealand.)

Outline how this project aligns with your institutions profile/charter/strategic plan e-learning goals and objectives:

This project matches the strategic goals in the Otago Polytechnic Profile 2006-2008 to:

- provide relevant, flexible and accessible learning opportunities which build capability, are stimulating, challenging and foster life long learning
- engage in applied research and practical problem solving which complements the applied focus of our curricula
- to develop an environment which stimulates creativity and supports innovation in all that we undertake
- to provide equal opportunities to participate and succeed in relevant learning for all people whatever their ethnicity, age, or abilities and with regard for their needs.
- to attract, retain and develop capable, qualified and experienced staff to ensure excellence in all of our endeavours.
- provide for successful, enjoyable, memorable and high quality educational experiences for all of our learners and engage with our various communities in ways which are mutually beneficial,
- build capacity and enhance the quality and relevance of our programmes and research activity

Effective design and knowledge about pedagogical principles for the use of technology in learning environments is critical to meet these goals.

Consequently, this project will contribute to the Tertiary Education Strategy 2002/07 in several ways: strengthen system capability and quality; strengthen research, knowledge creation; enabling students and learners to access excellent and relevant tertiary education; enhancing capability and information quality to support learning teaching and research.

Give a brief outline about how the innovation is to be sustained:

The process used for the research evaluation will inform future effectiveness evaluations of eLearning development which can be incorporated into budget planning for new course/programme development. The project will also provide an impetus for further research and add to the institutional research outputs and PBRF funding options. The networked learning and learning community spaces will be maintained and facilitated by an ever growing body of professionals involved in flexible learning.

Budget:

Budget item	Cost
Staffing	6 500
Administration (including overheads)	5 500
Computing, consumables and travel	1 500
Other (networked learning and learning community space set up and facilitation)	2 000
Total	15 500

Milestones:

Label	Brief outline of milestone	Date due
Milestone 1	Start of project	31 October 2007
Milestone 2	Exploration of exemplar case studies	28 February 2008
Milestone 2	setup of networked learning and learning community space	28 February 2008
Milestone 3	Research evaluation	30 June 2008
Milestone 3	Case study published on guidelines website	30 June 2008
Milestone 3	Completion of project	30 June 2008

Project payments			
We will make the following payments to you for the achievement of the milestones.			
Project deliverable	Milestone date	Payment date	Payment amount Note 2
1. Project Establishment		Note 1	30%
Milestones 1	31 October 2007	20 November 2007	30%
Milestones 2	28 February 2008	20 March 2008	20%
Milestones 3	30 June 2008	20 July 2008	20%

Note 1 Payment of project establishment fees 10 days after subcontract signed

Note 2 Total project costs are in the budget and will be paid in four instalments of 30%, 30%, 20% and 20%.